MEROZ CURSE
FOR NOT
HELPING THE LORD
Againſt the *Mightie*.

BEING

The Subſtance of a SERMON, *Preached on* a day of Humiliation, at S^t *Sepulchers*, LONDON, *Decemb.*2. 1641.

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Publiſhed in one ſheet of Paper, (not by the Author) but by a Lover of the Truth, for their good eſpecially, that are not able to buy bigger Bookes.

Being a very ſeaſonable Subject, wherein all that either out of policie or ſloth, refuſe to helpe the LORD, may ſee their danger; and they that are willing are called, and directions given to them, both what manner of perſons they ought to be, and what they ought to doe to help the Lord.

Wherein alſo every true Chriſtian may ſee, that though they be never ſo weake or poore, yet they may, and ought to helpe the Lord, and by what meanes.

Ezekiel 13. 5. *Yee have not riſen up in the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the houſe of Iſrael, to ſtand in the battell in the day of the Lord.*

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MEROZ Curſe.

Judg. 5. 23. *Curſe yee* Meroz, *ſaid the Angel of the Lord, Curſe the inhabitants thereof; becauſe they came not to helpe the Lord, to help the Lord againſt the mighty.*

THis Verſe containes a Curſe againſt a whole City, and all in it, wherein we may conſider theſe particulars:

1. A dutie that ſhould have beene performed, and that was, a comming out to the helpe of the Lord againſt the Mighty, the omiſſion whereof was the cauſe of the Curſe. 1.

2. The perſons curſed, and they were the inhabitants of *Meroz*, 2.

3. The Commander of the Curſe; *The Angel of the Lord*, to wit, Chriſt Jeſus himſelfe, who is the Angell of the Covenant, and Captaine of the Lords Hoaſt.

In the duty that ſhould have beene performed, we may conſider, firſt, the parties that ſhould have helped *The Lord*: ſecondly, againſt whom they ſhould have helped the Lord, and that is, *Againſt the Mighty*.

In the perſons curſed, wee may conſider, firſt, what the curſe was; and that I do confeſſe I cannot tell, whether it was fire or peſtilence but this is moſt certaine, Gods curſe is the ruine of thoſe people on whom it lights: ſecondly, wee may conſider what this City *Meroz* was, and for that I ſhall tell you, I cannot finde in the whole Booke of God this City mentioned once againe; and therefore cannot certainly tell you where it was ſituated, onely this wee may certainly conclude, that it was neere unto the place where the Lords people were in danger of their enemies.

I have begun this Text in another Congregation; I will therefore give you the briefe heads of what I have elſewhere more largely delivered, and ſo come to that which remaines.

Firſt, from the conſideration of the parties againſt whom they ſhould have holpen *The Lord*, it is ſaid they were mighty; whence wee have obſerved this point:

That the mighty ones of the earth doe many times oppoſe the Lord. *Doctr.*

Secondly, from thence we have alſo obſerved:

That Gods people ſhould not be afraid to oppoſe the mighty, when the cauſe is the Lords. *Doctr.*

2. Secondly, from the conſideration of the parties whom they ſhould have holpen, they were the people of God, and yet the Lord calls it his owne people, whence I obſerve:

Doct. That to helpe Gods people, is to helpe the Lord.

3. Thirdly, from the conſideration of this neereneſſe to the people of God, in regard of habitation I obſerved:

Doctr. That the neerer a people are to Gods people in diſtreſſe, the more is their helpe required, and the greater is their ſinne, if they doe not helpe them: this I applyed to our ſelves, in regard of that caſe of *Ireland*.

4. Fourthly, from the Conſideration that the curſe extends to all the inhabitants of the city, I obſerved:

Doctr. That there is neither man nor woman, but they may afford ſome help to Gods people in diſtreſſe, if they have grace in their hearts; thus farre have I gone already, and now the maine point that I intend to inſiſt upon at this time, is this.

Doctr. That they are all curſed that helpe not the Lord, that is, that helpe not the Lords people in the time of their diſtreſſe; for the proofe of this point, obſerve but that reprehenſion of *Moſes*, *Numb.* 32. 6. to the children of *Gad* and the children of *Reuben*, *Shall your brethren*, ſaith he, *goe to warre, and yee tarry here? no by no meanes.* And ſo our Saviour, in *Mat.* 25. 41. will ſay, *Goe yee curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devell and his angels; for I was hungry, and yee gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and yee gave me no drinke.* But I will ſtand no longer on the proofe of the point, but come unto the uſe of it, which I doe principally intend to ſtand upon.

Uſe. And firſt of all, is it ſo, that they are all curſed that help not the Lord againſt the mighty? then ſurely they are curſed with a heavie curſe, that help the mighty againſt the Lord: but I hope there be few or none ſuch in this Congregation, and I deſire not to ſpeake much to them that be abſent; yet if any of you that heare me have any friends that are guilty of it, I pray you tell them what a fearefull condition they are in, that ſet themſelves againſt the Lord.

But there are others, who are not ſo bad as to help the mighty againſt the Lord, and yet not ſo good as to help the Lord againſt the mighty, but ſtand as neuters at ſuch times, when it is hard to ſay, whether the Lord or the mighty will prevaile; and of theſe there are two ſorts.

1. The firſt ſort doe it out of policy, as now at this time, the Church of God in *England*, by reaſon of the mighty, hath beene long under tyrannicall government, and the Lord, we hope, is now at warres with them, why there are ſome politicians, that ſtand looking on to ſee which ſide will prevail. And if the Lord ſhould now reforme this government, and ſo prevaile, why then they would be on the Lords ſide, but if the mighty ſhould prevaile, which the Lord forbid, then they would be on the mighties ſide. But as *Gideon* ſaid to the men of *Succoth*, when they refuſed to give morſels of bread to his people that followed after *Zebah* and

Zalmunna,

Zalmunna, Kings of *Midian*, when the Lord hath delivered them into mine hand; *I will teare your flesh with thornes of the wildernesse, and with briers*: so say I to such, If the Lord prevaile against the enemies of his Church, the Lord will make them smart, be sure of it, for that you will now afford him no help against them. Judg.8.7.

The second sort are such as refuse to help the Lord not so much out of policie, as out of sloth and negligence, like unto the men of *Iabesh Gilead*, that went not to warre with their brethren against the *Benjamites*: but let such consider, what the *Israelites* did unto them by reason of this their sloth and negligence, as you may read, *Iudg.*21.8. &c. to wit, how they fell upon them and destroyed them, because they came not up to *Mizpeth* to the Lord. 2.

The next use shall be for exhortation to you all; Is it so, that they are cursed that help not the Lord against the mighty? why then brethren, as you desire to be freed from this curse, and to obtaine a blessing at the Lords hands, be exhorted to put forth your hands now to the help of the Lord, I pray you looke on mee, as on one that commeth amongst you this day to beat a drum in your eares, to see who will come out to follow the Lambe. Now then beloved, so many of you as are willing, come, and I will give you direction what to doe, that you may all of you afford some help to the Lord at this time. *Vse.*

And first let me tell you, that the Lord doth not require your help so much for any need he hath of it, as for to honour you thereby; for beloved, you are to know, that it is an honour to help the Lord, the Lord, as I may say, scornes to have help from every one, no, you must be fitly qualified before you be meet to help the Lord, and that with these three things.

First you must be godly, or else you are unfit to be helpers of the Lord; the Lambes followers must be such as are chosen and called, and faithfull; they must be holy men, and holy women; therefore you that are ungodly persons, believe it, you are not called to this help of the Lord. 1.

Secondly, you must be selfe-denying persons, you must deny your owne profit, your owne ease, your owne friends, yea, and all that you call your owne; the Apostle *Paul* writing to the *Philippians*, saith, *Hee hath no man like minded to Timotheus*, and in the next verse hee gives the reason, saying, *For all seeke their owne, and not the things of Iesus Christ.* Therefore I say, you can never be fit to help the Lord, untill you put off all that is your owne, and say to Christ as *Ruth* said unto *Naomi*. *Whither thou goest I will goe, and where thou dwellest I will dwell, thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.* 2. Phil.2.20. 21. Ruth 1.16.

Thirdly, you must be such persons as have a love to the Church; for beloved, you shall meet with so many rubs in the way, so many discouragements to flesh and blood, that if you have not a great love to the cause of Christ, you will be subject to turne backe from the Lords 3.

cauſe when there is moſt need of your helpe, therefore, alluding to that of the Apoſtle. 1 *Cor.* 13. I ſay unto you, the moſt excellent way is love, it is that which conſtitutes a man to be a meet follower of Chriſt; you know it is ſaid of *Iacob*, *Gen.* 29. 20. that the ſeven yeeres he ſerved for *Rachel*, ſeemed unto him but a few dayes, becauſe he loved her; even ſo brethren, if you get a love to Chriſt and his Church, you will willingly helpe the Lord, though you meet with ſome difficulties, therefore never reſt, untill thou haſt ſo much love, as to ſay, as I remember a godly Miniſter ſaid, I praiſe God, I am not troubled at any croſſe, but at the affiictions of Gods Church, nor I care for no welfare ſo much, as for the welfare of Chriſts Church.

Queſt. But it may be ſome will ſay, O Sir, but how ſhould I doe to get ſuch a love to the Church of Chriſt?

Anſw. Firſt, conſider how dearely Chriſt hath loved it, that he hath given himſelfe for it.

2. Secondly, conſider that he hath left his Church here amongſt us, and ſuffers it ſometimes to be in diſtreſſe, to try our love to it.

3. Thirdly, conſider, that if thou be a member of it, then all the reſt are very neere unto thee, even thy brethren and ſiſters.

Queſt. But ſuppoſe I be willing to helpe the Church to my power, what direction wil you give me, that I may put forth that power which I have?

Anſw. Firſt, doe as godly *Nehemiah*, *Daniel*, and old *Eli* did, that is, enquire diligently what the ſtate of the Church is, and let me tell you, brethren, I am perſwaded that it is a great fault of many of us here in *England*, that we doe not performe this dutie as we ought, wherefore be exhorted to labour at this time to finde out the ſtate of Gods Church, both in *England* and *Ireland*.

2. Secondly, when thou haſt found out the ſtate of the Church, and ſo conſequently, what it wanteth; then in the next place, conſider what thou haſt in thine hands to ſupply the want thereof: thou muſt obſerve this rule, that whatſoever good God hath put into thine hands, thou art but a Steward of it, and thou art to imploy it for the good of Gods Church; all Gods people have an intereſt in that talent that God hath committed to thy imployment.

Now, there is one talent which I am ſure every childe of God that is effectually called hath, though they be never ſo poore, and that is the talent of Prayer; for indeed, it is the ſureſt evidence to witneſſe unto them, that the Spirit of Chriſt is in them, when they can cry *Abba* Father: according to the Lawes of our Kingdome, a childe cannot be proved to be borne alive, except there be witneſſe that it was heard to cry; even ſo we ſay in Divinity, that every one that hath the new birth can cry to God his Father in prayer; ſo that I ſay, every childe of God hath this talent of Prayer.

And this talent the Lord requires they ſhould uſe and imploy for the

good

good of his Church and people, according to that Scripture; *Pray for the peace of Ieruſalem*, and that in *Iſay* 62. *Yee that are the Lords remembrancers, give him no reſt, till he ſet up Ieruſalem, the praiſe of the world*; and beloved, let me tell you, the exerciſe of this talent of Prayer, is charged upon all rankes and conditions of men, for that the exerciſe of no other talent can doe any good without this, neither the governing of the Magiſtrate, nor preaching of the Miniſter, nor fighting of the ſouldier, nor the contribution of the rich man, will doe any good without prayer; it is prayer that brings a bleſſing downe upon all; yea, the exerciſe of this talent of prayer many times doth more good than all the reſt. A praying Chriſtian (let me ſpeake it with holy reverence) can doe all that God can do, and therefore, in 1 *King.* 8. *Salomon* reckoneth up all the hard conditions that the Church of God can fall into and alwayes concludes, then heare thou in heaven &c. and then God anſwers, *I have heard thy prayers and ſupplications that thou haſt made before me*; with this talent of Prayer the ſervants of God have overcome God, and held his hands, in ſo much, that the Lord, if I may ſo ſpeake, hath beene glad to intreat them and command them to hold their tongues, and let him alone. Beloved, as God onely can remove the Churches troubles, ſo Prayer only can prevaile with God to doe it; it is Prayer that bringeth all Gods promiſes into performances; there is not any part of the world, but a Chriſtian can reach it by prayer; there is not a bleſſing in heaven, but prayer can fetch it downe; Prayer can knock downe enemies; when *Moſes* held up his hands *Iſrael* prevailed; *David* by prayer choked *Achitophel*; *Heſter* and her people by prayer hanged *Haman*. So that I may ſay of Prayer, as the Author to the *Hebrewes* ſaith of the faith of thoſe worthyes there mentioned, the time would be too ſhort, to reckon up all that a Chriſtian can doe by prayer. *Exod.* 17. 11

And yet alas, I feare mee, there are ſome Chriſtians who have grace in their hearts, that have not imployed this their talent for the good of Gods Church, whoſe conſcience will witneſſe unto them that they have not ſpent an houre in their cloſets, in exerciſing this talent for the good of Gods Church: O be humbled this day, for this your ſelfe-love, and want of love to Gods Church. And I am perſwaded, that the want of this hath been the cauſe that the enemies prevaile ſo in *Ireland* at this time, and that things goe on ſo heavily at *Parliament* here at home.

Wherefore you that feare God, I beſeech you be humbled for your omiſſion of this duty; and be exhorted to ſet upon the practice of it. O pray, pray for the *Parliament*, O pray, pray for *Ireland*, and call upon others to pray; there is no man ſo mean in his eſtate, or weake in his body, but if he bee a Chriſtian, hee may contribute ſomething towards this great worke; though he be not able to lend a penny, yet he may give a ſubſidie of prayers. Beloved, if all Chriſtians would exerciſe this talent aright, their prayers would be as a thundring Army againſt the enemies of Gods Church.

But

Quest. But how shall I doe to exercise this talent aright?

Answ. First be sure that prayer be prayer, let it not onely be in speech, but powre out thy desires before God; and to this end, get a heart truly affected with the thing thou prayest for.

2. Labour to get an humble and selfe-denying spirit, remember *Abraham*, when he came before the Lord in prayer, confessed he was but dust and ashes: and *Iacob*, when he came before the Lord in prayer, confessed himselfe unworthy of the least of all Gods mercies; and *David* cryes out, *Heare me, O Lord, for I am poore.*

Gen. 18. 27. *Gen.* 32. 10.

3. Alwayes when thou goest to prayer, be sure to carry thy Mediator along with thee, by faith in the promises, and begge earnestly for the Lords sake, as *Daniel* did, that so thy prayers may be fervent; O beloved Christians, if you would pray, and pray thus, you would be the most usefull people in all the world, yea, you would be the very props to these united Kingdomes; marke it then, you men of the world, you sonnes of *Belial*, that have beene wont to scoffe at praying Christians, and to wish them all packed hence, and at new *England*, alas, you know not what an evill you wish unto your selves therein, if they were gone, woe be to you.

Dan. 9. 17.

And thus much shall suffice to have beene spoken of the talent of Prayer; in the next place, what outward abilities soever thou hast, thou must also imploy for the good of Gods Church; for hee that is a rich man, if hee pray, and hold his purse, he cannot expect that his prayers should be availeable.

Wherefore, if God have given thee both grace and money, I doe in the Name of God beseech thee, to imploy both for the good of Gods Church and people, else it is to be feared, it may be as truly said to thee, as the poore man said to the Bishop, who asking him a penny for Christ his sake, the Bishop answered, I will not give thee a penny, but I will give thee my blessing; the poore man answered, Ah Master, if you loved your blessing as well as your penny, you would not give mee that neither. Wherefore then to conclude, whatsoever God hath given thee, that may doe the Church good, be willing to part with it for the Churches good.

FINIS.